

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 RSC-01 SSO-00 ISO-00 /017 R

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DRAFTED BY:S/S/O:RFICHTE

APPROVED BY:S/S-O:GTWOHIE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 008405

TOSEC 96

FOL DAMASCUS 0005 SENT ACTION SECSTATE JAN 14 REPEATED TO YOU
QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0005

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN, SY

SUBJECT: COURTESY CALL SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

1. ON JANUARY 13, I PAID INITIAL CALL ON SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
ABD AL-HALIM KHADDAM. CALL WAS ARRANGED AT HIS REQUEST AND LASTED
APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES.

2. SPEAKING IN ARABIC, KHADDAM EXPRESSED TO ME HIS PERSONAL
WISHES AS WELL AS THOSE OF HIS GOVERNMENT FOR "SUCCESS" OF MY
MISSION. HE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES HIS READINESS TO BE OF
HELP TO ME AND TO INTERESTS SECTION SHOULD NEED ARISE. HE
ALSO EXPRESSED HIS HOPE TO SEE ME OFTEN IN FUTURE.

3. REPLYING IN ARABIC, I EXPRESSED MY PLEASURE AT BEING IN
SYRIA AND STRESSED THAT I WAS AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES TO ACT AS
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CHANNEL BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS FOR PURPOSE OF IMPROVING

RELATIONS BETWEEN SYRIA AND U.S. AGREEING WITH HIM THAT THERE ARE MANY DIFFICULTIES ON THE ROAD TOWARDS IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES, I POINTED OUT THAT THE FACT A DIALOGUE HAS NOW BEGUN IS IN ITSELF AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD THAT GOAL. I ALSO CONVEYED PERSONAL REGARDS TO KHADDAM FROM SECRETARY. OBVIOUSLY PLEASED, KHADDAM RECIPROCATED AND STATED THAT HE LOOKS FORWARD TO VISIT OF SECRETARY ON JAN 18.

4. NOTHING OF SUBSTANCE WAS DISCUSSED ALTHOUGH KHADDAM MENTIONED THAT FOREIGN MINISTRY WILL BE NAMING MEMBERS OF SYRIAN INTERESTS SECTION IN WASHINGTON OVER NEXT FEW DAYS.

5. COMMENT: EVEN THOUGH PRIMARILY A COURTESY CALL, I THINK IT SIGNIFICANT THAT CALL WAS SET UP AT KHADDAM'S REQUEST. (ITALIAN EMBASSY WAS ALSO SURPRISED AT THIS.) MOREOVER, CALL OBVIOUSLY ONE OF FIRST ITEMS ON KHADDAM'S AGENDA INASMUCH AS HE RETURNED NIGHT OF JAN 12 FROM GULF AND I WAS INFORMED EARLY MORNING OF JAN 13 SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE MEETING TOOK PLACE AT 1 P.M. IN ANY EVENT, KHADDAM WAS FRIENDLY AND RELAXED THROUGHOUT MEETING AND I SENSED THAT HE WAS GENUINELY PLEASED TO MEET ME. SCOTES UNQUOTE RUSH

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